

Sub-Standard Quality Ration under Antyodaya Anna Yojana

†1232. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that 25 kilogram ration per month which is distributed through Public Distribution System to every poor family under the "Antyodaya Anna Yojana" in various States of the country is of sub-standard quality; and

(b) if so, the details of the effective steps proposed to be taken by Government to ensure that such sub-standard foodgrains, that is not good for their health, is not distributed to the poor in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) No. Sir. Good quality foodgrains conforming to the specifications laid down by the Government and the PFA norms are issued to the States and Union Territories for distribution under the public distribution system including the "Antyodaya Anna Yojana" and other welfare schemes of the Government.

(b) The following steps have been taken by the Government to ensure that only good quality foodgrains are distributed:

- (i) Ample opportunities are provided to the officials of the State Governments/UTs to inspect the stocks prior to lifting from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns.
- (ii) Instructions have been issued to all the State Governments/UTs that an officer not below the rank of Inspector should be deputed to check the quality of foodgrains before lifting from the FCI godowns.
- (iii) The samples of foodgrains are to be jointly drawn and sealed by the officers of the State Governments/UTs and the FCI from the stocks for display at the counters of Fair Price Shops for the benefit of consumers.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- (iv) The officers of the State Governments' and the Ministry pay surprise checks of the FPSs, to over see the quality of foodgrains being distributed through TPDS.
- (v) The officers of the Department designated as 'Area Officers' for monitoring the TPDS work in the respective States also undertake visits to the storage depots and the FPSs, during their visit to the States to check the quality of foodgrains being issued.

Amendment to Consumer Protection Act

1233. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government propose to amend the Consumer Protection Act during the current Session of Parliament;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the highlights of the amendments contemplated; and
- (d) whether the major consumer groups operating in the country including Consumer Coordination Council have been consulted with regard to the proposed amendments and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) to (b) The Consumer Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2001 to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 26th April, 2001. The proposed amendments are mainly aimed at facilitating quicker disposal of consumer complaints, streamlining the procedures and widening the scope of the Act, strengthening the powers of the redressal agencies etc.

- (c) Some of the important amendments contained in the Bill are as follows:
 - (i) Creation of benches of the National Commission and State Commissions and holding of circuit benches;